

### **BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Alfred Lopez**

Alfred Lopez, second of six children, was born in 1932 in Lahaina, Maui, to Emily and Sabino Lopez. His mother was born and raised on the Big Island of Hawai'i. His father was an immigrant field laborer from the Philippines. On Maui, the family resided in Pioneer Sugar Company's Kiawe Camp.

In 1935, the family moved to Lāna'i where his father did field work, first as a mule man, later as a *luna*, or foreman. His mother, while tending to the family and household, took in workers' laundry.

Alfred Lopez attended Lāna'i High and Elementary School. Married at an early age, he entered the labor force, holding down various jobs, including setting pins at the bowling alley, working at the theater, cleaning yards, and doing construction jobs.

In the mid-1950s, he began working at Pine Isle Market where he was assigned various tasks. He also did pineapple field work and road work.

Retired from employment with the State of Hawai'i (Highways and Airport Division), he still continues to work at Pine Isle Market.

He and his wife Alfonsa have a family of five children, fifteen grandchildren, and thirty-three great-grandchildren.

Tape No. 56-31-1-13

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Alfred Lopez (AL)

Lānaʻi City, Lānaʻi

April 11, 2013

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: Today is April 11 and I'm in Lānaʻi City. This is Warren Nishimoto and I'm interviewing Mr. Alfred Lopez for the Lānaʻi Culture and Heritage Center oral history project.

So, good morning Mr. Lopez.

AL: Good morning to you Warren.

WN: Can I call you "Alfred"?

AL: Yes.

WN: Al? Alfred? What's better? What do you prefer?

AL: Al is fine.

WN: Al Lopez. Okay. First question to you, is what year were you born?

AL: AL: I was born in 1932.

WN: Where were you born?

AL: I was born in Lahaina, Maui. They call the area Kiawe Camp.

WN: Kiawe Camp.

AL: Yeah. And those days was midwife—the birth.

WN: Okay. So what were your parents doing in Lahaina, Kiawe Camp. It was Pioneer Mill [Sugar Company], right?

AL: Yeah. My father used to work for the sugar company. He used to do *hāpai kō* they call it—work.

WN: He was *hāpai kō* man?

AL: Yes.

WN: Can you describe *hāpai kō* briefly?

AL: I think they chop the cane and pile them up and they carried it. They load them up, I guess physically. I'm not really sure but I think that's what it is.

WN: What was your father's name?

AL: His full name is Sabino Flores Lopez.

WN: Where is he from?

AL: He was from the Philippines. Philippine Islands. Bohol City.

WN: Bohol.

AL: Bohol, yeah.

WN: And your father was Visayan.

AL: Visayan, yeah.

WN: Tell me, do you know anything about his family background?

AL: Well, what little I know is they're farmers and fishing in their life. They had to work for their food, farming.

WN: And Bohol was a place that several—immigrants from the Philippines came to Hawai'i from?

AL: Oh yeah. They came from Philippines to work in agriculture.

WN: So, if you can tell me something about your mother, what was her name and where did she come from?

AL: My mother's name is Emily de Victoria—also Lopez. Maiden name. She was born in Wainaku.

WN: You couldn't remember the place last time.

AL: Wainaku. This time I remember.

WN: Big Island?

AL: Big Island, yeah.

WN: So what is her background?

AL: Background? She's of Puerto Rican, Spanish, and other. Her father came from Madrid, Spain. Her mom I guess from Portugal. Her background was being just a home—wife I guess. They got married early too in those days.

WN: Oh, your mother and father?

AL: Yeah. Her first husband—my father was the second husband. But she was married before.

- WN: With her first marriage, how many children did she have?
- AL: She had—she probably had six. Second marriage she also had six.
- WN: Second marriage, what number child were you?
- AL: I was second.
- WN: Number two.
- AL: Number two.
- WN: So your father is from Bohol, Philippine Islands. Your mother is from Wainaku, Big Island.
- AL: Big Island, yeah.
- WN: So your mother is second generation, your father is first generation.
- AL: Yes.
- WN: Did your mother and father ever tell you about some of the things they experienced? Some of the hardships or any stories they remember telling you about their childhoods?
- AL: A little bit about the lifestyle. They had to work hard. They did a lot of fishing. Raising vegetables. Got married early. My father, the same thing. They liked to plant vegetables. Filipinos depend a lot on vegetables and sometimes they raised some chicken. That's all. I don't know too much about them.
- WN: Did they ever tell you why he decided to come to Hawai'i?
- AL: He wanted to start a new life. You know, it's hard in the Philippines. Money-wise, it's hard to get money, and the lifestyle was hard. They wanted to try something new and better their life. So they came to Hawai'i.
- WN: Did he come by himself?
- AL: No, I think he came with his uncle.
- WN: His uncle?
- AL: Yeah. Because he was young. He was about seventeen. So the uncle brought him with him.
- WN: I see. And they went to Lahaina. Pioneer Mill [Sugar Company] first.
- AL: Yeah. I think they first started in the Big Island working, and then moved to Lahaina.
- WN: Okay.
- AL: That's when he met my mother I guess. Then they moved to Maui.
- WN: I see, I see. So your mother and father moved together to [Lahaina], Maui.

- AL: Yeah, you know before days they get story. My father *cowboy* with mother. Took my mother from the other guy. They used the word *cowboy*. That's the story they give me. Used to call it *cowboy*. That's why he moved to Maui.
- WN: So you think she was still married when your father went *cowboy* her?
- AL: Oh yeah. (WN laughs.) I'm sure, because they had kids. They were married because the name was different. Then my father *cowboy*. She came with my father. Six kids with Sabino [Lopez].
- WN: Do you know what year your father came with his uncle to Hawai'i?
- AL: I'm just going to guess, but I think somewhere around—I'm not sure but maybe end of [19]21, I think.
- WN: What kind of stories did your mother tell you about her growing up on the Big Island?
- AL: Well, they had to work hard. My grandma was very strict. They had a little farm like, where the kids all worked in the farm for eggs and food. Whatever they can produce. They had a hard life. They all had jobs to do. She got married early. She got married before she was even fifteen, I think. Fourteen years old.
- WN: When you were growing up, did you visit? Did they still have family on the Big Island?
- AL: Yes. Lots of family. I have lots of cousins. My auntie is just about gone already. Big family. We had a lot of family on the Big Island till today. We had a reunion a few years back. I think they had over 200 people from Big Island and the other islands too. We're all spread out. (Laughs)
- WN: Well, your mother had total, twelve children yeah?
- AL: Twelve children, yeah. It's a lot. We all work hard though. It wasn't easy, but it was a good life. Simple life. Work the home, eat, and do our thing. But we were happy. We were happy. We're still happy.
- WN: There you go. Now when you were three years old, your father and mother and your brothers and sisters moved to Lāna'i.
- AL: Yes.
- WN: Nineteen thirty-five.
- AL: Yeah.
- WN: Do you know why you folks moved over here?
- AL: Yeah, he wanted to try the pineapple. It was hard work. *Hāpai kō* is very hard work. My father described it: "It's always a hard day work for me—morning to late in the evening." I'm sure it's hard work, but I really don't know. I don't remember seeing him working.
- WN: From what you hear from people, is sugar work harder than pineapple work?
- AL: Pineapple is hard. I would think they're about the same, because you're carrying a bundle of cane, and pineapple you're carrying the bags of pineapple to the end of the block. But I never

experienced cane work. I'm sure it's hard too, according to how my father described the work. And pineapple I know because I picked pineapple (laughs).

WN: We'll get into that. From the time you remember as a small kid, where was your house?

AL: My house was—well it's now called Queen Street. That's the last row.

WN: When your father came here and while you were growing up, what kind of work do you remember him doing?

AL: I think he started as a mule man. And, I guess all the basic [jobs] like pineapple [picking], slips, like that. Weeding he used to do. Loading, I'm sure he did loading.

WN: Loading crates onto the trucks?

AL: Yeah. In the old days. That's the labor part. I don't know what else he did, but then he worked his way up to a horse *luna*. He fell a couple of times too (laughs), but he would stand up again. Then they started using the walk-around.

WN: So he was a *luna* in charge of a gang?

AL: A gang, working gang.

WN: Oh, so he rode the horse too? Supervised.

AL: Supervised, checked on the men, checked the area, whatever he had to do. He really worked hard from early to late in the night. Morning to dark, I guess. Tired, but he had to work to feed the family.

WN: So tell me about your Queen Street house. What was that like? How many bedrooms had?

AL: It was two bedroom. It was a small house. It's still standing, the houses up there. You ever been to Queen Street?

WN: I've seen Queen Street.

AL: Yeah, all those houses. All the original homes are [still] there. So we lived about three or four houses away from one stop sign. I still remember the house. We had a lot of neighbors. All mixed. Where we stayed we had a lot of Orientals I think, our place. Portuguese, a mix. I grew up with all mixed [ethnicities]. We'd play and we had fun together.

WN: I know you had six stepbrothers and sisters and [there were] six biological siblings. How many of these kids actually lived in that two-bedroom house? Did all twelve live in there?

AL: All [six] of us. The ones that are born here, from my sister Violet—she just passed away—right up to my kid brother. He used to be an entertainer with Don Ho, Al Lopaka. His name was Al Lopaka, the youngest.

WN: Your brother was Al Lopaka?

AL: Yeah.

WN: Oh, I didn't know that!

AL: You don't know?

(Laughter)

AL: Yeah, Honolulu, he was.

WN: I must have that in my notes.

AL: Yeah, he was. He was entertaining. He got in an accident in, I think, a benefit polo game he played. Then he fell and the horse fell on him.

WN: Oh, I remember that. He's your older brother? Younger brother?

AL: Younger brother. He was ten years younger than me.

WN: I see.

AL: He was the baby of all of us.

WN: So he changed his name from Lopez to Lopaka.

AL: Yeah, stage name. Singer. He was a horseman too. He just loved horses. Good horseman. He played polo. He was an entertainer, and [played] polo until he had the accident.

WN: So, what was it like with twelve of you—well fourteen of you with your mother and father in that two-bedroom house?

AL: Six. Six plus two, eight.

WN: So eight? Two of your step-siblings came over?

AL: No. Just six of us and my father and mother. The rest stayed with their grandma in Big Island.

WN: I see, okay.

AL: Like *hānai* other side because two different fathers.

WN: So eight of you in that house.

AL: Yeah.

WN: So, two bedrooms, so who stayed in where?

AL: (Chuckles) I don't remember (WN laughs), I just sleep where I can sleep. Either parlor or wherever, in the bedroom. Piled up just like little sardines or something. But we were happy. We just sleep on the chair, the couch like that. We didn't have much furniture. We had simple kind of chair. Mostly had bench, and the table was wooden table. Two bench, both side, and a big table. Wooden table. That's how we have dinner. Breakfast. I remember we had the wick chairs.

WN: Oh, wicker.

- AL: Yeah. We had two or three of them. That's all, other than bench. I still remember that.
- WN: And it was what, tongue-and-groove single-wall construction?
- AL: Yeah. That's how all the houses were. They built that way in the [19]30s, the early [19]30s I think. Or late [19]29. But they must have the record. It's still standing. That wood is good I think, pinewood.
- WN: Had kitchen in there?
- AL: Yeah, little kitchen. So we had kitchen, parlor, and two bedrooms. Little veranda. Small veranda.
- WN: When your mother cooked, what did she cook with in the early days? Kerosene or. . .
- AL: Kerosene stove with a wick. Solid thing you just push it in. You turn it with a crank. And kerosene. Then push them up and light them and it would flame up.
- WN: So it's like a cylinder you put in.
- AL: Yeah. And when you turn it off you turn it all the way back and the fire goes off.
- WN: And you light them [i.e., the wick] with a match?
- AL: You light it with a match when you want to start it again. Raise [the wick] up. Same thing with the heater. Water heater we had like that with the wick.
- WN: What about outhouse or bathroom?
- AL: We had a bathroom. Our neighbor had half and we get the other half. Outdoor. That was when we were up Queen Street, but when we moved onto the Fraser Avenue where we stayed, they had this bigger outhouse. You get four [seats] on one side and four on the other side. Man. Woman. We had to go out there, from your house to your bathroom.
- WN: How far was that?
- AL: For us it was a little over 100 yards from my house, the bathroom. Everybody share, right? Of course we had the *furo* and showers too. Men half, and half woman.
- WN: So you shared the showers and the *furo*—I mean the *furo* and the toilet with how many people? How many families?
- AL: Oh, by blocks. We lived in Block 67, so we had I don't know how many people. I think a couple of blocks. Just have to go there to bathe.
- WN: How many houses made up one block usually?
- AL: So it would be six houses I think. (Pause) I think seven houses to a block. I'm counting right now what we had. From Lāna'i Avenue, Thirteenth Street, from the [Lāna'i] Hongwanji [Mission], yeah?
- WN: The current Hongwanji?



AL: Yeah, right now. That was one. That used to be—I think it was a boarding house, I’m not sure. But that’s where you used to have all the *kine* Oriental training school. Jujitsu, and only Orientals could use at that time. You like learn, you couldn’t learn unless you were Oriental. And Judo. (Pause) Eight houses.

WN: Eight houses in one block.

AL: We were Block 67.

WN: On [Block] 67.

AL: We still get eight houses.

(Laughter)

Just some they fix them up, remodel it. Renovate.

WN: The outhouse you said had four seats for men, four seats for women?

AL: Yeah. Four this side and four in the back. One building but they put a partition in half. Guys come—what do they call that?—disinfect the area. They carry the knapsack with a pump in the back and they [would] spray.

WN: Oh, spray disinfectant?

AL: Yeah. I remember all that. I see that guy do that, I don’t know how many times a week, but they just go up (AL makes a whooshing sound) go next block.

WN: And you always remember toilet paper? Or you had to use something else?

AL: We used to—whatever we get. Newspaper or other *kine* paper. No more toilet paper before. You got to find your own material (laughs).

WN: Somebody told me they used a Sears Roebuck catalog.

AL: Yeah. Whatever paper you can [get].

(Laughter)

Today, everything’s paper, paper.

WN: You know the outhouse, did they keep it at the same place or did they once in a while move it someplace else, dig another hole?

AL: No. That’s it. Build the hole, that’s the outhouse for that section.

WN: I bet that’s why a lot of things grow over here.

AL: Healthy.

(Laughter)

Lot of fertilizer. We used to get a lot of rain. We always get rain over here.

WN: So you had the outhouse and then the *furo*, you said the bath.

AL: Yeah.

WN: Was that a separate building?

AL: Just further up here, we have the *furo* place. Bigger section. Half for woman, half for man. In the back here they have another building for laundry, when you wash the clothes. Wash the clothes with hot water, hit it with the wood—the flat [piece of] wood.

WN: So the laundry facilities were over there too?

AL: They had all the cement sinks where you wash. I still remember, but I don't know how many they had. Six or eight here where everybody share to wash the clothes. And they had a fireplace where they get firewood and boil the clothes [in a] fifty-gallon drum. You boil the clothes when you wash. So you use a (wooden flat) stick, *palopalo* we would call it [to beat the clothes].

WN: *Palopalo*?

AL: I used to watch my mother wash and all the ladies.

WN: So this was pre-washing machine days?

AL: That's the hand machine.

WN: They had the scrubbing [wash]board?

AL: Yeah, they had the scrubbing board. I have one still yet. Grooves on top [of the board]. Scrub it. *Palopalo*. Rinse them. Some people take laundry. Some families did laundry for the single guys.

WN: Did your mother do that?

AL: She did. Yeah. Make a little extra money.

WN: What about ironing?

AL: They had iron. I forget how they do that. I don't know if they got charcoal or something. I don't remember much about ironing. Until electric came up, I think before then—I don't know how they iron, but they used to iron I remember. We had electric after that, but I don't know when the electric came.

WN: So the laundry and the *furo* area were in the same area?

AL: Laundry and the *furo*? Yeah. Like this can be the washhouse. Right next is the *furo*.

WN: So how did the *furo* work? How did you guys take turns using it?

AL: It's made out of wood. Like the Oriental Japanese *kine furo*. But big yeah?

WN: How big?

AL: I would say we used to swim inside, small kids. (Chuckles) Workingman come home and he would grumble. The water messed up. It's about maybe six feet. Not that. . . . Maybe eight feet I think.

WN: Eight-feet long?

AL: Long. Three- or four-feet wide. Big.

WN: So you guys could actually go inside the *furo* or did you just use the hot water to put it over yourself?

AL: We go inside.

WN: You guys go inside.

AL: Jump inside. The working guys come home always chased us out. Scold us. Mess up the water.

(Laughter)

WN: So you wasn't supposed to go inside the water.

AL: I don't remember. I know we used to swim inside. On the side they had showers, I think. They had the *furo* here, and on the wall get showers.

WN: You shower first.

AL: Yeah, some shower, some—like we jumped in there. We don't even shower, we just jump in the *furo*. Like swimming. But we shower sometimes. That kind of thing.

WN: Who took care of the *furo*? Who made the fire?

AL: Oh, they assigned parents. I know that [where] we were staying, the *furo* was taken care of by Hokama—the mom. You know the [Maui County] councilman before, Goro Hokama?

WN: Goro? Yeah.

AL: His mom [Oto Hokama] used to do that.

WN: No kidding.

AL: Light fire. Make the hot [water]. They had a small building in the back where you have the boiler. She used to take care of that. Yeah, I remember. She worked hard too, that lady. Everybody worked hard before. They always worked.

WN: So every *furo* had somebody to take care and clean up afterwards?

AL: Clean up and maintain the area. She was in charge of the area, the fire place.

WN: I see.

AL: I forget her name, but I know Hokama.

WN: That's a lot of work.

AL: Yeah. She worked hard, that lady. She made a garden too. The before days too you see the old folks—Filipinos, Japanese, might be other nationalities, plant vegetables.

WN: So you folks had garden?

AL: Yeah, we tried some types but not so good.

WN: What did you folks grow in the garden?

AL: All kind of staples. Beans. Head cabbage. Talk about head cabbage, all the neighbors [grew it]. I used to go, and us kids [would] shoot the cabbage.

WN: Slingshot?

AL: Shoot the cabbage. We get chased. They chase us. "You naughty boy!"

(Laughter)

But by the time we grow up we got along nice.

(Laughter)

I guess not only me. Just growing-up as kids yeah? A lot of them are gone now, but I remember the good times.

WN: So tell me, you had a slingshot. So how did you make slingshots?

AL: With a guava branch. Get some branch and it comes like that [i.e., forked]. So it was down, and you cut down here for where you hold it. Trim this. Put rubber here.

WN: How you get the rubber?

AL: Tire, old tires rubber. Company would throw out [tires], so we get that. Then we stretch them. Get a handle, the guava got to be like that for a handle.

WN: A fork branch.

AL: You cut them. You had a lot of guava trees. Plenty guava, so we make slingshot.

WN: What did you use? Rock? Or what did you shoot?

AL: Rock and we used the *sendan* tree I think we used the fruit. *Sendan* tree we called it. About this size. Solid.

WN: Like a pea?

AL: Yeah, it's big. But if you shoot bird or something we used rocks. We used rocks you could find.

WN: So you had a group of friends from the Block 67 and you guys used to hang around?

- AL: Yeah. We used to play. We go up—what do you call that place?—it's growing *mānienie*. Get the little mountain over there before you go to the open field. We used to call that place King of the Royal Mountain.
- WN: King of the Royal Mountain?
- AL: (Chuckles) We go up there play and act like cowboys. King of the Royal Mountain. I still remember that.
- WN: You said most of your friends were all different *kine* nationality?
- AL: Yeah. Mixed. I used to get along a lot with the Hawaiian people too up the ranch. We used to get ranch up here.
- WN: Kō'ele?
- AL: Kō'ele [Lāna'i Ranch]. I used to spend a lot of time up the ranch too. Nice, elegant. That's where you see the real *aloha*. Before days yeah, they all mostly Hawaiian people up there.
- WN: You mean like the Kaopuikis?
- AL: Yeah, Kaopuiki, Kauwenaole, Kwon, Richardson, and Gibson [families]. I think I can remember if I think slowly. But the nice *lū'aus* that lasted long time. Days. But you know, enjoy yourself.
- WN: How often would they have the *lū'au*?
- AL: Well, for occasions. Mostly for weddings. I remember one wedding. He got married to his wife up the ranch, I think it was about two, three days that the *lū'au* was. I was young at that time, but we spent a lot of time up there. I think I was about fourteen, fifteen. It must have been a little over two days, the *lū'au*. Lot to eat, a lot of food. Used to get big kind of *lū'aus*. Today you have some but not like before.
- WN: Your father was Filipino, your mother was Puerto Rican. . . .
- AL: Spanish..
- WN: Spanish. What *kine* foods did you folks eat at home?
- AL: As I was telling you we had a big family. I guess my mom tried to find a certain kind of food where you can get plenty of it. Like the soup bones, stews. Sometimes we get chicken, but then you get potatoes. Used a lot of kidney beans or other *kine* vegetable.
- WN: So you guys had Filipino food? Puerto Rican food?
- AL: Yeah. My mother cooked mostly that *kine*. Stew. Stew was a popular meal. Plenty, you can stretch them. Yeah, I think that was the main food we ate. A lot of stew. Soup. Fish.
- WN: And the vegetables came from your folks' garden?
- AL: Some from the garden. Not that much, but sometimes you get from friends too. They share everything. Some people they share food, vegetables like that. That's a simple life. Hard life, but good life. You learn, you know how to live better. You struggle.

- WN: You said Hawaiians had *lū'au*, [living at] the ranch What about you folks? You folks have any holidays that you folks celebrated?
- AL: You mean my family?
- WN: Yeah.
- AL: Oh, we celebrate mostly birthdays. We celebrated within our means, how much we can do. Just family *kine*. Simple *kine*. We no more much. You got to stay within your means. But before days too the company used to get these annual parties. The company sponsor a lot of these special days. We used to get like Lucky Luck. Do you remember Lucky Luck?
- WN: Yeah. Lucky Luck.
- AL: Company events, he [Lucky Luck] used to entertain in the ballpark. We got food line. You go get food, soda. The company used to sponsor. So, special days they do that. Christmas, New Year's, and Thanksgiving. Special days. We used to have the grandstand over there. On the side they used to have the food place where you go pick up your food. We used to get a lot of beverage. Gradually they stopped it.
- WN: So the company would have these picnics and things?
- AL: Yeah. Picnics on the beach where you bring the truck with people. The old truck.
- WN: Oh, you mean the company would transport you guys down to the beach.
- AL: Yeah. The families. They go by block. Fifty-four hundred or fifty-two hundred. They call it. Rotate. You go down to the beach that weekend, next time a different [block]. They furnished all the transportation. And they used to have beach homes for the [different ethnicities]. Used to get for the whites, Filipino, for the Japanese.
- WN: Beach house?
- AL: Used to get that *kine* houses for each nationality.
- WN: Now, where? Mānele?
- AL: Mānele. Newer houses now, but, used to get for each nationality.
- WN: And you guys just borrow them for a party?
- AL: Yeah. You get approved, you go there. Whatever. Kind of segregation. Now that I think about it, that's what it was.
- WN: So, only the Filipinos used the certain house. The Japanese used another house.
- AL: Yeah. I think that's for. . . . We got to learn each other's culture too I think before this. Different styles. Got to learn each other's way I guess.
- WN: And you were considered—because your father was Filipino you were Filipino? I'm wondering.

- AL: Sometimes they think I'm Filipino, and sometimes I'm Spanish. (WN laughs.) So I could go two side, but they know if they ask your parents. They don't know. The guys don't know either. They see you and you look white, you're Spanish.
- WN: The gatherings at the ballpark for like on holidays and special occasions, that was on a day when nobody worked. Sunday?
- AL: Yeah. Special day, everybody go over there and enjoy. The whole city.
- WN: Had entertainment too?
- AL: Yeah. Musicians come over, play. I still remember that.
- WN: Sounds like good fun.
- AL: Fun. Today you can't really get that. Just looking around you see the difference. Everybody too busy. Like before, every time you stop in the street you start talking story. You got plenty of time. Today, like no more time. Same day, same place, but changes. That's sorry to see.
- WN: Yeah.
- AL: In Honolulu you guys too, when I think before days.
- WN: Around your house, did you folks have chickens?
- AL: Yeah, we used to raise chicken.
- WN: The chicken was for what? For eat or for egg?
- AL: Eat. (Laughs) Eat and eggs. I'm still eating chicken today. (Laughs) Only thing now, you just pick them up in the store. All cut up, skinless, boneless.
- WN: So what were some of your chores or jobs around the house?
- AL: You know, [I was] spoiled, I think, before. I was only boy. So I do what I like.
- WN: Out of the six you were the only boy?
- AL: Yeah. My brother never come till late. The early part was only me. My brother was the last one.
- WN: So was girl, then boy, then girl, girl. . . .
- AL: Girl, girl, all the way till my brother came out.
- WN: Ah. Okay. So what about killing the chicken and gathering the eggs and stuff? Who did all that?
- AL: Mostly my sisters, I think. Me, I just rascal. I go play. Always play, play, play. (WN chuckles.) I was the only boy. (Laughs) They spoiled me. My parents, like everybody's parents, were nice.
- WN: So as far as growing up over here in Block 67, I mean could you go anyplace? Were you allowed to go—you said you went to the ranch [Lānaʻi Ranch].

- AL: Just about eleven, twelve years old I used to spend a lot of time up the ranch. Every chance I get, I go. Sometimes I sleep there. Sometimes it rained, I get wet. They give me clothes to dry up.
- WN: Your parents never worried about you?
- AL: I never remember that they worried. I going to come home sooner or later.
- WN: Well, they knew basically where you were.
- AL: Yeah, they know I like to go up there and play inside the ranch. The feed room there is like a big storage area. We used to play in there. Watch the cowboys wrangling the horse and all the corralling.
- WN: What about church? What church you folks went?
- AL: I was baptized at the Catholic church [Lāna‘i Catholic Church of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary]. Still I’m a Catholic. But I go [to different] churches, I go Hongwanji. I go all the churches. Christian. Whatever. My friends, where they go, I go to that church.
- WN: So what *kine* activities did the church have for you folks?
- AL: Activity, you mean like games?
- WN: Yeah.
- AL: They had carnivals—you know, money-making—and they teach you I guess Bible class. Which is good. Make you think better. Make you disciplined.
- WN: You said that you didn’t like [regular] school too much. You weren’t a good student.
- AL: No, I used to—I would run away. I remember one time I was in second grade, in fact. I jumped out from the window and ran home. I don’t know why I never liked school. But after that, I would go back school. I played in the band. I played sports. Played football. I get into high school and I got into trouble again. Girlfriend, boyfriend, young. I told you. . . .
- WN: Yeah, I’ll get to that. I just wanted to ask you, did your father speak English?
- AL: Yeah, he tried. He can speak English, but not that good. Sometimes a little bit backwards when he talk but we understand.
- WN: Did you learn any Filipino?
- AL: Yeah, a little bit.
- WN: Visayan?
- AL: Visayan, Ilocano. And a little bit Tagalog.
- WN: But they didn’t push you to learn.
- AL: Yeah, because my mother, she speak English. My father never did talk to us too much too. He had to learn English too I think. So we never got to learn much. I learned from where I worked. I



met a lot of Filipinos. Visayan, Ilocano, Tagalog, and they speak and I ask. Little by little I pick up. I can make little bit sentence too. I understand. But I wish my parents taught me. Converse with the old folks. I can learn from them. Help them. That's why I've had to learn a little bit, so I meet old folks that can understand and serve them better in the store where I worked. Wherever I worked.

WN: How old were you when you first started working in the pineapple field?

AL: I think I was twelve years old, because they were short of labor, I think. But not eight hours. They used to let us work, I think it was six and a half hours a day. Not every day, I think it was.

WN: Everybody I talked to said that right around twelve years old they started. So that's probably the. . . .

AL: That's what I remember because I wanted to work so much. So when I reached twelve, they hired me. I felt good.

WN: So you and your friends got hired.

AL: Got hired. All our classmates, we were all working. Go on the labor truck.

WN: This is summertime only?

AL: Yeah. Usually summertime, no more school. Sometimes weekends, too, when they really need workers. Saturdays, I think.

WN: I noticed that when you were twelve years old, that was about 1944.

AL: Yeah.

WN: So that was wartime, right?

AL: Yeah.

WN: What was Lānaʻi City like during the war? Were there military people here?

AL: Yeah. They had military people here and they trained lot of the working people here. They called it the "home guard". Volunteers. Like my father was in the volunteer [home guard].

WN: What did they do? What did the home guard do?

AL: They trained to be prepared in case of war. Protect the island. I see them train, and the American Legion hall used to be below the senior citizen area. Used to get one big building there. They trained. I remember the training. I remember the commanders, the sergeants, they're all volunteers.

WN: So your father was in this home guard?

AL: Yeah.

WN: Besides training, what else did they do? Were they the ones that went around to tell people to turn off the lights?

- AL: Yeah, I think they do that and they go target shooting. Target practice.
- Yeah, they go around watch the light. They would tell [people] to put out your light or put black paper so the light won't shine from the window.
- WN: Over the window?
- AL: Yeah. Mulch paper, they called it.
- WN: Mulch paper? So that's the same paper they used for the pineapple field?
- AL: Yeah. (Laughs) Darken.
- WN: Had plenty [mulch paper] then though, on Lānaʻi.
- AL: Plenty. We used in the field too, for the planting. They used to, I guess, government buy that during the war.
- WN: Because other areas they used tar paper. You know the black tar paper?
- AL: Yeah, yeah.
- WN: But I guess over here they had so much mulch.
- AL: You ever use that? Same thing, mulch and black paper.
- WN: Is it the same thing? Tar paper and mulch?
- AL: Yeah. I tell you, same.
- WN: Same thing?
- AL: Same thing.
- WN: Yeah, yeah. I guess so.
- AL: (Laughs) That's what they used.
- WN: How did you folks get along with the soldiers? How did you get along with them?
- AL: Oh, they don't bother us. They didn't bother me. I just let them do what they got to do, I guess. We don't bother them. We were kind of innocent. We didn't know what really was going on then. So they do what they had to do. But they trained the volunteer service [i.e., home guard].
- WN: I think when I talked to Felix Ballesteros he said he used to shine shoes for the military. You do that too?
- AL: Oh yeah, I used to shine shoes. Fifteen cents, ten cents, quarter, depending on what kind. Some you get double color so a little bit more expensive. Used to get shoe box.
- WN: How you got that shoe box? You made them?

- AL: Make our own, yeah.
- WN: What did the shoe box—what was it. . . .
- AL: No, too big.
- WN: One foot long?
- AL: That long and this wide.
- WN: It had handle?
- AL: Yeah, some they put handle. Can make handle, but me, I don't know if I had. Maybe I had strap, I think. Piece of rag. Some, they make handle.
- WN: What you had inside? The polish and so forth?
- AL: You got all your polish. Your ink. The brush. Some rag. A little bit of water. So they can shine. But mostly just plain ink and polish. Soft brush.
- WN: How did you get your customers?
- AL: Well, we go down to single [men's] dormitory, they called it. We go there, hustle. Ask them, "Would you like a shine? Shine shoes?"
- WN: This is like military, or just locals?
- AL: Locals.
- WN: Oh, you did for the local men.
- AL: Yeah. Local guys at the dormitory. Used to be—in fact used to be in the service station area. Let me see if I got it right.
- WN: You mean Nishimura?
- AL: Yeah. Over there used to be—all that area. Used to be a round circle of dorms over there. Inside they had two or three showers. Big building for the workers. Long circle. House, house, house, house.
- WN: Oh, like in a circle?
- AL: Inside you get *furo* place for the dormitory.
- WN: So like who stayed there? I mean, bachelors stayed there.
- AL: Yeah. Mostly bachelors.
- WN: Were they like temporary workers or were they . . .
- AL: No, regular workers. Most of the guys now I think are gone, though. I was young but I remember. That's long ago. They used to live in there and drive motorcycles, I remember.

WN: So you guys had to compete for the customers then, for shoe shine?

AL: Yeah. You shine shoes, you compete. The more you hustle the more you get. (WN laughs.) You shine fast while you worked. Well, you make me think of the good days.

(Laughter)

Get good memories.

WN: I know some got the military customers.

AL: Yeah, you get military too.

WN: I would think that's pretty good, military.

AL: Yeah. They got money, military guys. Even the local guys—single guys, bachelors—working. They make money too. They have money, but not much. Their pay was small. So ten, fifteen cents [per shine]. You lucky you got twenty-five cents. Twenty-five cents was big money.

WN: With the money that you would get, what did you do?

AL: Buy ice cream, candy. That's what we think about, because you cannot buy candy and ice cream all the time. Nobody's parents would make enough money.

WN: Where would you go for the candy and ice cream?

AL: I used to go to Okamoto Store before. Right over here. They had like general store. Ice cream and any *kine*.

WN: What *kine* ice cream had those days?

AL: I go for the sandwich. It used to be big, the sandwich. (WN laughs.) Square like that. Now they got a skinny sandwich.

And inside, sometimes while you're eating the ice cream, get a little paper that says "free". You bring that and you get one free ice cream. A lot of us used to go over there. You could get penny for Kisses. I think it was two pennies. Two pennies, you get two or four Kisses. The kind in the silver wrapping. With a penny you can get candy. Today it's dollars.

WN: So now tell me, from twelve-years-old time working in the field, what kind of work you did? What jobs?

AL: Mostly they use us when we were twelve, weeding mostly.

WN: Oh, *hō hana*?

AL: *Hō hana*. Pull weeds. Twelve years old, you sleep all the time. Still remember I would sleep in the line. My *luna* look for me. (WN laughs.) One time he see me, "Hey, look this way. Hey, *hanahana*." Go work. "*Hanahana*" means work.

WN: *Hanahana*. Yeah. How much you got paid? First time.

AL: I think I was getting thirty-five cents an hour.

WN: And work six-and-a-half hours a day.

AL: Yeah. Thirty-five cents.

WN: That's more than shining shoes, yeah?

AL: Oh yeah. Big bucks already. Get dollars when you come home.

WN: And you had *bangō* too? You had *bangō* number?

AL: I don't remember having *bangō*, though. My father's *bangō* was 1490, I remember the number. Because I had to go [to the] bank and pick up the card, 1490, they give you the envelope with the [pay] inside. It's the remaining after they deduct from all of the charges in the store. That's your balance. They only make like seventy dollars, seventy-five dollars a month.

WN: So you would go to the bank and give them your father's *bangō*?

AL: Yeah. You just tell them [the] *bangō* and they go look for [the pay envelope].

WN: And they trust you?

AL: I don't know. I guess so.

(Laughter)

You go there and get nothing, you going to get licking when you go home, yeah? Father going to give you spanking.

WN: Okay, so *hō hana* was your main job. You were assigned what, one line?

AL: By blocks, I think. And the whole block, you get cuts. Maybe a cut is about twenty, maybe thirty yards long. And the width maybe double that. But it's your block.

WN: So you would weed with the hoe?

AL: Yeah.

WN: You would be given a hoe?

AL: We used to get a hoe and a weeder, too. Mostly in between the line you got to use that. But usually it's *hō hana*.

WN: What kind of worker were you? Good worker?

AL: At that age, we worked. But, we played more than we worked, I think. (Laughs) When the boss come, the *luna* come, you know, we got scolding. But we worked too. But not 100 percent, you know. You twelve years old, you got other things to think about—to play or something. But normally you work.

WN: And you would bring your lunch out to the field with you?

- AL: Yeah, yeah. We bring *kaukau tin*. We got regular for the rice, the top [layer is] actually for the *okazu*. We had the handle. *Kaukau tin*, yeah. We get our lunch, put inside there, water inside. Carried it.
- WN: And you guys would eat right out there?
- AL: Yep. When they would blow the whistle, it means *kaukau* time. We used to get two lunch, 9:30 and then again at 11:30. They blow the whistle. When it's time to work they blow the whistle again.
- WN: So you get break too? Break time too?
- AL: Yeah. The morning one and lunch—twice a day.
- WN: Every summer you would work from twelve years old, every summer?
- AL: Yeah.
- WN: How did your jobs change as you got older?
- AL: As you get older you can do maybe harvesting pineapple. They call it slip. Breaking off slip. Slip's the seedlings for replant.
- WN: What was considered the hard job? I mean, twelve years old, you couldn't harvest.
- AL: No. The job we had was easy, actually. The hard part is you out there in the hot sun. For weeding it's not hard. It was good for us. We learned how to earn money. Money didn't come easy, we remember that. Work hard for it, you learn from that.
- WN: How was your *luna*? You had the same *luna* every year?
- AL: No, sometimes you get Filipino, sometimes you get Oriental, Portuguese. I used to get along good with my Oriental *luna*. His name was Nishimura.
- WN: Nishimura?
- AL: Yes. Good man, but he was old. I think he was tired, so he [would] sleep, yeah? So when the boss come, we wake him up. "Hey, boss come!" We take care of him because he was good. (WN laughs.) I remember that *luna*. He teach us good. Nishimura. Even my wife remembers him. She used to work under him too. Good man.
- WN: So related to the service station family?
- AL: No. Different guy. You can remember some certain *lunas*. Some strict, but they strict because that's their job. Now when you get older, you realize that.
- WN: Among weeding and the harvesting and the slips, what was considered the hardest job?
- AL: I did planting. That was the hardest or me. Your back [hurts because] you bend [over]. Some people are strong. I used to be a strong guy.
- WN: And they're planting mostly the slips?

- AL: The slips, and the crowns too.
- WN: The crown too?
- AL: The crown, yeah. They plant that. I find that [job] the hardest. When I reach home I just stretch on the porch.
- WN: Bending down with—and you having just one small. . . .
- AL: Knife.
- WN: Knife. One foot long.
- AL: Plant that and you'd loosen the ground and then you go back and shove them right inside.
- WN: You carrying the slips in a bag or something?
- AL: No, they pile them up on the block. This truck comes [with the] supply and they drop one bundle here and they go further down, another bundle. Further down, another bundle. Estimate about how much you work for that area.
- WN: I see.
- AL: Then you pick up [slips and crowns] from the bundle, spread them around. Spread them around before you plant. It's hard. First time you go, easy, but a half hour after that, oh the [back] starts [hurting]. You got to come up for rest.
- WN: When you were a student you would do that?
- AL: Student? No, I was man [i.e., adult] already.
- WN: Oh, that's when you started working?
- AL: Well, [as a] student maybe the hardest was harvesting pineapple. Used to carry the pineapple in a bag. Sometimes we over-carry. I over-carried and you walking, sometimes you get roots cross on the ground and you stumble. Everything go, you and the bag of pineapple.
- WN: Fall down?
- AL: So you learn how to carry enough where you can balance good. Pile them up all at the end of the block. Then we used to box them. We used to cut the pineapple.
- WN: Cut the crown off?
- AL: Yeah.
- WN: The bottom too?
- AL: Trim.
- WN: Trim the bottom? And put them in the crate?

AL: Box them up.

WN: And you got paid by the hour or by the crate?

AL: Well, they had contract, depending on how much we get [boxed]. I remember it used to be thirteen. After you make thirteen boxes, you make your [quota]. So after thirteen crates, just like bonus.

WN: Depending if you had harvesting job or you had weeding job, you still got paid the same amount? As a student.

AL: Oh yeah.

WN: Okay, you know what? I think we're just about done for today. We're right about the time when next time we can start with high school and you getting married. You folks moved to Fraser Avenue around that time. And then, we'll get eventually into your other jobs, like bowling alley and things like that.

AL: Those were the days.

WN: Yeah. Okay?

AL: Okay. Thank you, Warren.

WN: Thank you.

AL: My pleasure. I hope I helped you some.

WN: Oh yeah.

END OF INTERVIEW



Tape No. 56-32-2-13

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Alfred Lopez (AL)

Lānaʻi City, Lānaʻi

April 18, 2013

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: Okay, today is April 18, 2013 and I'm in Lānaʻi City. This is Warren Nishimoto and I have the pleasure of interviewing for the second time Mr. Alfred Lopez.

So, good morning, Mr. Lopez.

AL: Good morning to you Warren.

WN: You know, last time we were talking about your small-kid days.

AL: Yes.

WN: Before leaving that subject, because you seem to really have a good memory of your old days. Not only a good memory but you remember these days very fondly. So I want to continue with what you did as a kid. What was growing up here in Lānaʻi City like when you were a boy growing up? What things do you remember that stand out in your memory?

AL: Well, we played a lot. We get the *kine* game. We played it. I don't know what how you call it. You hit the stick and bang, bang, bang. I forget the name of it [*peewee*].

WN: I think . . .

AL: We played it as teenagers and young kids. Marbles. Hide-and-seek. And we had a lot of adventures. We go out in the fields to go pick up *lilikoʻi*. Plenty *lilikoʻi*, we found.

WN: Where was the *lilikoʻi*?

AL: All up here on this mountain. Lot of *lilikoʻi*. The purple one, not the one they [use to] make juice. The purple one is sweet, that one.

WN: Yeah. So was growing in the pineapple field or growing . . .

AL: Mostly up on the side of the roads, going up the mountain. Plenty.

WN: So this was like growing wild?

AL: Oh yeah. Just growing wild. Every year I get. Plenty *lilikoʻi* fruit.

- WN: Besides *liliko* 'i, what other *kine* fruits you guys had?
- AL: Lot of guava. Guavas and rose ap. . . .
- WN: Rose apple?
- AL: Rose apple, yeah. Plenty. A lot of trees we used to get. We used to get mangoes, too, down Pālāwai , where the first Mormon colony was. I still remember before they plowed up the place, they had rock walls. They make stone wall. There were maybe two, three big mango trees. So every season, we go down, a bunch of us kids. Pick up mangoes like that.
- WN: What *kine* mango?
- AL: Common mango. Plenty fruit.
- WN: So then how did you guys eat the common mango?
- AL: We just ate them just like that from the tree. Some were ripe. You got to eat them ripe, if not, it's sour. The green ones, you bring them home, you put them in *shōyu* or vinegar or salt or something. Some with *bagoong* sauce.
- WN: Yeah. Fish sauce.
- AL: Yeah, yeah.
- WN: You guys used to eat mango with *bagoong*?
- AL: Yeah.
- WN: Oh yeah? So how you did that?
- AL: Just dip them like sauce.
- WN: Okay.
- AL: Slice the mango up.
- WN: Just put them in the *bagoong*?
- AL: Yeah. You did them in the *bagoong*. (WN laughs.) You got to get used to it.
- WN: Now this was mostly green *kine* mango though?
- AL: The green one. The ripe one you just eat them.
- WN: Well, I heard people eating with *shōyu* and sugar and vinegar.
- AL: Yeah, sugar.
- WN: But I never heard *bagoong*.

AL: *Bagoong*, you can eat with that too. But there is certain kind of *bagoong*. This one is like a—the *bagoong* is like purple. It's like little shrimp I think. Some like it salty, so you use the strong one.

WN: People used to make their own *bagoong* over here or was it mostly bought from the store?

AL: Usually bought, but they make their own too. I know some friends that do. But you see, you got to chop them up, mix them up, and ferment them. Under the house or something inside a can, they bury them.

WN: What *kine* fish they used to use?

AL: They use *aku* guts. Sometimes you get small fish, you can make like they call it *monamon*, I think. Just like *iriko*.

WN: *Monamon*.

AL: *Monamon*. Yeah.

WN: But it's like *iriko*?

AL: Yeah, because no more scales, that fish. Just like *iriko*.

WN: And your mother used to make *bagoong*?

AL: No, my neighbors. My mother, she didn't know how. But she knew how to eat.

(Laughter)

We never learned that. Even my father never made.

WN: Your father used to cook?

AL: He didn't cook too much. My mom did the cooking. He did the working, before days. Men [were] kings, yeah, before. Working men. The woman stay home, take care of the family. Now it is different. Fifty-fifty. Equal rights.

WN: So you know like the common mango trees? Was it just growing in the pineapple field?

AL: No, not in the field. I think they planted that. The old days, the Hawaiians I think, maybe. Or the Mormons, because there used to be the Mormon colony. But no more, but I still remember it.

WN: You remember Mormons living in one area?

AL: I never remember Mormons living, but I remember the colony—where they lived before.

WN: Oh yeah. Like what was that? Was it houses?

AL: No houses. Grass shacks. I think the shacks all fall down already. But they made stone walls.

WN: So this is like Walter Murray Gibson time?

AL: Yeah. Just about that time. Way back.

WN: And this was down Pālāwai?

AL: Pālāwai. Yeah. And used to be a lot of cactus down there before.

WN: Oh, Pālāwai?

AL: Yeah. All cactus, cactus. Plenty.

I was small boy yet, but when we go to the beach, go on the road, truck go slow. Five miles an hour, I think, coming out from the beach and the picnic. But plenty cows all over the place. On the beach when you go down to Keōmuku, plenty cows down there.

WN: They were wild or part of the [Lāna‘i Ranch]?

AL: Yeah, ranch. Plenty cows.

WN: Had cows up here too? Had cows around here?

AL: Yeah, the Pālāwai side they used to have. All down the mountain area. I still remember the slaughterhouse, you know where they had the slaughterhouse?

WN: Where was that?

AL: You know where the hotel [i.e., The Lodge at Kō‘ele] is now? Below the hotel you got this big fence area. Inside there someplace. Where there’s a tennis court now. Just about that location. You drive in. I still remember going in. And there was a small shack, not too big, where they hook up the cow, hang them. And I guess they hit them with a sledgehammer or something—the old days.

WN: Hit them on the back of the head?

AL: Yeah. Hang them, bleed them, then start skinning.

WN: Who was running the slaughterhouse?

AL: I don’t remember the name, but mostly Hawaiians. The old time Hawaiians I remember were Richardson, Kaopuiki, Kauwenaole, and the Japanese guy, his name was Sakamoto. Small man, but tough man, you know. He really controlled the animals. He was one of the old-timers. The Gibson family, I think I mentioned, yeah? A lot of families, I kind of forgot, but I know the main ones.

WN: Kwon was another.

AL: Kwon was another one, yeah. William Kwon. They were part-Korean, part-Hawaiian. And Sam Shin family. If I see a picture, maybe I remember.

Who else? Kauila. He was a good horseman. Skinny, tall man. Good horseman. Kauila family.

WN: Yeah, I remember Ernest—I met Ernest Richardson.

AL: Yeah. He was good horseman. He had a brother, John Richardson. They both are buried over here. I used to go a lot to Ernest Richardson’s house. There was Elaine Kauwenaole. And Gibson,

I think one of the girls was my classmates. Betty Lou, I think, and Marlene Gibson. That's two sisters. She's in Honolulu, still living.

WN: Marlene Gibson?

AL: Yeah, she's still alive. That was her maiden name. I don't know now. She's married. And the sister was Betty Lou. They lived there a long time. The grandma was alive, and I think they're white, you know, but the grandma could talk fluent Hawaiian. Small lady, but she could talk clear, good, fluent Hawaiian.

WN: And this is the same family as Walter Murray Gibson?

AL: Walter Murray Gibson is well known. I don't know if they're related. Maybe they're related.

WN: And you city kids—you used to play with the ranch kids?

AL: Some. Like me, I used to like to go up there.

WN: That's right, you went, yeah.

AL: I go up there all the time. I just feel at home. I had a nickname before. The lady died—Rebecca. Her name is Rebecca Richardson. She would name me "Sweetie Pie."

(Laughter)

She called me "Sweetie Pie", and that name carried with me a long time. As I would get older she would see me in the store, "Hi Sweetie Pie." (WN laughs.) Real *aloha*. Nice lady. Nice people.

WN: Now Rebecca, she was married to Ernest?

AL: Ernest. Yeah. Good horseman and nice man too.

WN: Rebecca called you "Sweetie Pie"?

AL: Yeah. Then they all call me "Sweetie Pie". The old-timers, "Oh, there goes Sweetie Pie!"

WN: Oh, you must have been a sweetie pie?

AL: Well, I think maybe they find me nice. I probably was good, because I enjoy over there. I enjoyed the hospitality and everything. They real nice. Take care of me, like one of the family.

WN: You used to go to the Ernest Richardson and Rebecca Richardson's house?

AL: Yeah.

WN: The one where the hotel [The Lodge at Kō'e] is now?

AL: Yeah. Used to be up out that way in the grassy area. Used to get a couple of rows of houses up there. Mostly two-bedroom homes. And they had outhouse and washhouse. Same like what we had in the city. Lot of horse activity. They ride horse all the time.

WN: You know, they had a big ranch headquarters up there.

- AL: The bosses' house.
- WN: Well, I've seen pictures of it. Looked like a flagpole and then had like a big house.
- AL: Oh, that was where the ranch bosses used to stay, I think. I forget his name.
- WN: Is that the ranch boss?
- AL: Yeah, he was a big man. Used to be the boss man. I forget his name though. I think he was German, but he was the boss man. I used to know his name, but now it's. . . .
- WN: Yeah, me too. I used to know his name.
- AL: (Laughs) I forget already.
- WN: Okay, so we were talking about *liliko 'i*, mango, what else?
- AL: Plenty *pohā*. Wild *pohā*. Go up there and pick up plenty before.
- WN: That's why you healthy. You ate all the fruits, that's why.
- AL: (Laughs) Natural fruit. Natural yeah? I used to get a lot of fruits before, *liliko 'i* especially. Good eating, that. Can make them cold or just get them right when you harvest. But got to be purple. If not, then it'll be sour.
- WN: Did people used to make jam? Jelly?
- AL: Yeah. Juice. You can make juice. We used to make juice. I don't know about jelly, we never did that. But, I guess some people do. The old days.
- WN: I know you used to fish a lot as a kid.
- AL: Not too much as a kid. As I got older I did fishing. But I would go sometimes with my uncle, pole fishing, a little bit. But I'm more play. Go play around, adventure.
- WN: So, right around when you're going high school—let's talk about high school. What was high school like for you?
- AL: Good. I was really rascal, but good. I like to play. I didn't study enough, that's my downfall, but I liked sports and I enjoyed football.
- WN: For the high school?
- AL: High school. Lāna'i High School. Barefoot. Before, no more shoes. We used to play up the golf course before.
- WN: Cavendish?
- AL: Yeah, up there used to get the flat place. I think it was [at the] number six or seven green. Big flat [area] over there. (WN laughs.)
- WN: It was a golf course back when you guys used to play [football]?

AL: I don't think it was a golf course then. Maybe it was. I'm not sure now. But we used to play for the school. We had a school team and we played up there. I remember the coach used to be—I still remember the coach—Minami. His name was [Kiyoshi] Minami. He was a good coach. Every time he [would] teach us, give us good advice. But you know, young, I sometime no listen. Teach us how to throw block. How many times he teach me the hip block. You know, you throw your hip and knock the other guy. I throw the hip, the guy just jump over me (chuckles). Come back and get good scolding. “Not like that! This way, this way!” I thought just throw the hip but the guy just jump over me. They made us run.

(Laughter)

I never forget that incident. It was funny. . . .

WN: Who did you guys used to challenge? Who did you guys play?

AL: Maui. Sometimes Maui, or the locals get team like Japanese team, or Filipino team. The school, mostly we play against other schools, but Maui schools.

WN: So you guys used to go take the boat go Maui?

AL: Yeah. *Nai'a* I think used to be. Fishing boat. Just like regular *aku* boat. (Chuckles) Smell all the fumes. A lot of diesel. Plenty guys got sick.

WN: And you guys used to go Moloka'i too?

AL: Yeah, I remember going there for agriculture. Contests about weeds. Plants—name the plants. And the gym, Moloka'i gym. I still remember that.

WN: So football, anything else? Any other sports?

AL: I did a little bit of boxing, but I am not a fighter. I'm not much of a fighter. I rather play music than boxing. I did little bit of boxing just to go inside the gym for free. They had good boxers, Lāna'i against a Honolulu cannery team or something. Couple of times they had.

WN: Who were some of the good boxers from Lāna'i?

AL: Oh, family. My brother-in-law was real good. He used to fight same time with Dado Marino. Dado Marino became world champion. When he was young, he rascal guy too. My mother used to do his laundry before.

WN: Dado Marino was from Lāna'i?

AL: He came here to work, yeah? He had a brother, but I cannot remember his name.

WN: Besides high school sports like that, did people come from Honolulu or Mainland to play over here?

AL: Yeah, used to get—from Honolulu we used to get quite a few of the cannery teams.

Oh, another fighter was good, Gabriel Haime. He was a high school student. He started to learn how to fight. He was real good boxer.

WN: Gabriel, what was that?

AL: Gabriel Haime.

WN: H-A. . . .

AL: H-A-I-M-E, I think. Haime. And he was good.

WN: What about like football teams, baseball teams? They came over here to play?

AL: Yeah. But we had our own like AJA [Americans of Japanese Ancestry] and LFCA [Lānaʻi Filipino Community Association] and playing among each other here. But, I don't remember too much of outside teams coming here. They probably came but I forget. But it was barefoot, I remember. No more shoes.

WN: What about helmet?

AL: I don't remember having helmet, too. Maybe I had helmet, I think. I told you about [the time] I ran and tackled the guy coming straight for me and knocked me back. I never tell you that?

WN: Hit you in the head?

AL: No, I ran to tackle him. He was with AJA team. Instead of tackling him, though, I [tried to] tackle him standing up. He was running with his force this way. I [got knocked] back. Next time I listened to my coach, eh?

(Laughter)

Yeah, that was a good one. I never forget that one too.

WN: What about shoulder pads? You guys had shoulder pads?

AL: Yeah. We had. I remember shoulder pad. Hip pad. But other than that, no shoes.

WN: So shoulder pads, hip pads, and maybe helmet.

AL: Maybe helmet.

WN: Maybe, but you don't remember.

AL: I don't remember helmet, though. Yeah, I'm sure we had helmet. Kind of fade, that part. I was getting a whacking left and right. No can remember. That is quite a few years back. It's a long time ago. I remember crazy things happened, I remember. That football one. Instead of tackling the guy, that guy whacked me and I went backwards. Funny how you remember things like that.

WN: Good that you remember. If you don't remember. . .

(Laughter)

. . . maybe then you really got hit hard.

AL: Damage. Yeah, I remember that. I never forget that one.



WN: So you were going to high school, and you were telling me that you didn't finish high school.

AL: Yeah, I didn't. We went to only eleventh grade. Not complete the eleventh grade. I thought my—my wife thought she was pregnant. But actually, you just sometimes get that missed period.

WN: She was your girlfriend at the time?

AL: Girlfriend, yeah. We both were juniors. I stayed back one year. I was supposed to be a senior, but I failed after sixth grade, I think. Filipino style, the family got together to work out something. They discussed between the two families. They agreed to let us get married. And the principal, he said, "You're going to get married." He pushed her to get married, too. Murray Heminger. Big principal. Big man. German.

WN: Heminger?

AL: Heminger. Yeah. He was nice enough, he gave us a nickel tray.

WN: Oh, for wedding gift?

AL: Wedding gift, yeah. He did give us. I remember that one. But then, the night that we discussed—they discussed the plans for get married, she had her period. She told me. I said, "Could you stop it?" She don't want to stop it. You know, I guess embarrassed yeah? Before days you really feel embarrassed for that kind of thing that's happening. So I said okay, let's go through. It was hard, but you know kids yeah?

We were lucky that I had good parents, and my wife had good parents too. The support was there. Because actually, we were still growing up. I grew up with my kids just like. You know, when you start getting kids, yeah? That's why lot to do with the parents—their support. Otherwise, five kids, what's going to become of them? Fortunately they did good, my children did good. As good as they can, because my wife was really good. Well brought up.

WN: Terrific. Looks like you made the right decision, huh?

AL: (Chuckles) I'm sure. Yes. (WN laughs.) I am serious. Because they all. . . .

WN: She's probably going to be watching this, so good you answer. That's a good answer.

(Laughter)

AL: That's the truth.

WN: That's the truth. Right.

AL: It is the truth.

WN: Yeah. Good, good.

AL: She's a good woman.

WN: So junior year you and your wife both dropped out of high school. So what happened after that?

- AL: We got married. Then after that, still growing up, I tried to find work but at that age it's hard to get work. They don't want to hire. No one like hire me at that time. I was seventeen, I think. You got to be certain age before the company take you in. They're not sure of me, I guess. Finally I got a chance to work bowling alley.
- WN: That was your first job?
- AL: Yeah. That's my first job. Pinsetter.
- WN: What is a pinsetter?
- AL: You stay in the back. They knock off the pins, you got to pick up all the pins and put them inside slots. There's a machine that sets the pins down. The thing come up and the pins all standing.
- WN: Oh, you do that manually?
- AL: Yeah, manually it was. That's the old days.
- WN: How come you had to put something down? You couldn't just put the pins into the slots?
- AL: Yeah. And you got to press them down, because they couldn't stay up. You got to press them down and then the release come back up.
- WN: You put them into the top part?
- AL: Yeah, if this is the machine, you get the pins you put all inside there.
- WN: Oh, okay.
- AL: Then get the handle, press them.
- WN: Oh, I see. So they didn't have slots on the floor.
- AL: No. You get the regular floor but the [machine] set them up. They hit them up, then you put them back again. Ten cents a line.
- WN: So you get two balls. The first ball, say, they knock down seven pins. You got to clear the pins away?
- AL: The falling pins?
- WN: Yeah, the falling pins.
- AL: No, you just let them go, because they're going to bowl again, yeah? They're going to hit the other ones. Usually the pins are gone anyway. I don't remember clearing pins.
- WN: But, say, after the two balls they leave pins standing up.
- AL: Well that's it.
- WN: You just [clear] them away, right?

- AL: Yeah. And you reset again for the next.
- WN: So you got to keep track then?
- AL: Yeah. You got to make sure you count or somebody going to be yelling on the other side.  
(Laughs)
- WN: You don't want to give somebody three balls. (Laughs)
- AL: You got to watch. It's your job to concentrate. Exactly.
- WN: And then how many lanes did you. . . .
- AL: We used to have—we take two lanes [apiece]. I know we had four lanes [total], I think, Lāna'i Bowling Alley.
- WN: Oh, four lanes? So one guy had two lanes, the other guy has two lanes.
- AL: Or if one-one. Depend how busy, yeah? Maybe no can handle two while two guys take one each.
- WN: How you stay out of the way when the ball coming?
- AL: You jump up on little table behind. It's a wall like this. You can stay over here, you go behind here.
- WN: You got to jump up?
- AL: You can watch all the pins fly up. Then when they're falling you can jump down and set them up again. Hard work. (Laughs) Real hard work for ten cents a line. Oh, that's a lot of work. But, the money was good. You can buy something at least.
- WN: What about the ball? You got to return the ball?
- AL: Yeah, you put the ball back in. You roll it back.
- WN: Son of a gun.
- AL: Yeah, all manual, it was.
- WN: Because me, you know I only remember the machine. Everything was machine.
- AL: Oh, you guys on automatic, yeah?
- WN: Automatic.
- AL: Yeah, us guys we had the old style. Start from labor. Manual *kine*. It was hard but, no choice. Take it or no more job. But then I kept working after that. Then I became dog catcher. Any *kine* odds and ends. Yard work. I used to do a lot of that.
- WN: Okay, wait a minute. So bowling pinsetter. And you said what? You were. . . .
- AL: I was a dog catcher.

WN: Dog catcher?

AL: Yeah.

WN: Working for who?

AL: For Maui County. I still remember the boss name. I don't know where she is now, but used to be Marion Moody. She used to be the boss for me, when I was working dogcatcher.

WN: So what did you have to do?

AL: Put away dogs that sick or people don't want. Or catch dogs. Dogcatcher, you call that. Cats, put them to sleep. We have injections. Sometime you have to get a dog wild, so I get sausage or something. Put inside the sleeping pills. Feed them and they sleep. Sad, you know..

WN: Only if the dog is not well though?

AL: Only not well or sick already.

WN: What about the healthy dogs that you had to catch?

AL: Well, they [i.e., owners] got to come and get it or else they got to put them away too. Give them so many days. Quarantine and nobody claim them, then put them away.

WN: So how long did you do that job?

AL: I think one year maybe. Then I worked for LCWA, Lānaʻi [Community] Welfare Association.

WN: Okay, before we get to that though, you were also a projectionist at the Lānaʻi Theater.

AL: Yeah, that's [run by] the LCWA. But I started as a doorman, collect tickets.

WN: So you collect tickets at the door.

AL: Yeah. (Chuckles) Then I work my way up to projectionist. But I had to go school.

WN: So how they do it? They buy the ticket first?

AL: Yeah. There's a cashier and you buy your ticket. Then you go around to the front door. Then they enter the theater.

WN: So never changed then. That's how they do them now.

AL: Yeah. Same. Still the same. That's the theater right there.

WN: Right there, yeah.

AL: It's the same one.

WN: So what did you have to wear?

- AL: Well, you have to dress decent at least. The man before me used to wear a suit. I just wear clean clothes and maybe nice shirt and pants, and collect tickets. Then had opening for projectionist. I had to go Maui to take test, electrical test. I was fortunate enough to pass the test. Because you got to have license. Then I stayed there a few years, maybe four or five years, as a projectionist.
- WN: So as projectionist, did you have two projectors or just one?
- AL: Two.
- WN: Two? Because you had to have two reels on.
- AL: Yeah. You had to rotate. Get almost end, you get signal on the film. Dots. You got to count that. Eighteen, nineteen, you got to practice what is your timing. Then you start the other one before the thing black out. Back and forth. Sometimes if film broke then you got to patch them. Join them together.
- WN: Oh, did that happen a lot?
- AL: No, not too much. But sometime it does and it just broke.
- WN: So what are people doing while you're fixing them?
- AL: Play music. (Laughs) They got music in the theater.
- WN: Nobody complaining?
- AL: Oh, they make noise. But they got to understand you got to fix. Big noise sometimes they make. I just don't pay attention.
- WN: You know back then they didn't just have the feature movie, but they had like cartoon and news. You had to do all that?
- AL: The film is set to play when the boxes come in and the cans [canisters] come in. When get cartoon, big noise, the kids. They yell. The usher with a flashlight make them quiet. I remember all of that. The kids were excited. I think my wife was one of the usherettes. We both had to work.
- WN: Usherettes—ushers are mostly female?
- AL: Mostly woman.
- WN: Ticket takers and projectionists were male?
- AL: Male, yeah. The ticket seller was female. Ayako Okamitsu, she used to be ticket seller.
- WN: What *kine* movies you remember showing?
- AL: Well, before days mostly you get cowboy and all *kine* American movies. But then on Monday, I think, and Thursday is reserved for Filipino. Thursday, Japanese movie. So I [got to] see all the movies. (Chuckles) The old folks bring their own pillow for sit down. They had nice setup.
- WN: They bring their pillow to sit on the chair?

- AL: Yeah, mostly they bring their own, because not everybody get cushion. They used to have cushion *kine* but have solid *kine*.
- WN: And this is mostly nighttime? The movies.
- AL: Yeah. Mostly evening. But summertime they get day and night movie. For the night shift they get movie for them during the day. Then you get nighttime movie. Plenty movies before. All I see is movie, movie, movie. (Laughs)
- WN: And you see the same movie more than once per day, yeah?
- AL: You get two of the movie I see the same thing two times. Three times. (WN laughs.) It's a job.
- WN: After you take the tickets, you just standing in the back?
- AL: You mean after I—as a doorman?
- WN: After you take the tickets.
- AL: Yeah, just stand and see that everything is all right. The ladies need help. Sometimes get people you got to give a hand. You got to talk to them. Set them up.
- WN: So while you were doing bowling alley and doorman and dogcatcher, that was your sole income for your family?
- AL: Yeah.
- WN: Wow.
- AL: I was working Pine Isle [Market] too. I worked double job. Or, sometimes three times, two jobs.
- WN: Okay. Then another job that you had before we get to Pine Isle, you said you worked as yardman?
- AL: Yard work, yeah. Wherever need yard clean.
- WN: Where did you go for yardman?
- AL: Oh, up here. *Haole* house, Up Camp. Or wherever needs yard work. I do it.
- WN: So sometimes you working three jobs? Yardman, pinsetter . . .
- AL: Any job come up, I'd do it. You had to eat. I used to work even for—I even knew Thomas Tanaka from Honolulu, construction. He did all the school [construction work] so I worked for him, too. I think construction, about ten years. This building here, I worked on this [Dole Corporation] administration building with Thomas Tanaka.
- WN: Okay, I'll ask you about that. I just wanted to ask you, before we get into the construction job, what do you remember about the [19]51 strike?
- AL: [Nineteen] fifty-one strike? I wasn't working the store yet.
- WN: You weren't at the store yet?

- AL: Fifty-one strike, no, I wasn't working. I was construction already. I used to work construction. I think, yeah, [19]51. I used to work for Western Builders. We used to do road work. And tunnels, too, at the same time. All in the early [19]50s. Drilling, mining work for water.
- WN: So right about 1950 you started working construction?
- AL: Construction, yeah. In fact, I remember I worked in the water tunnel. I started as a helper. I help these guys. The other guy used to be the driller, Sonny. One day he made a mistake. He never wait for me to do my job. I was supposed to loosen up the bolt and put the new drill bit inside. He stuck his head inside in front and tried to do it himself. That's when he lost his hand. Couple of fingers. Just cut them right off. You don't try to take that job and rush, yeah? He rushed, that's why he lost his fingers. I remember that clearly. Solid steel, went right through. Rushed him up the hospital and he all right, but he lost a couple of fingertips. That was scary.
- WN: So when you say you worked with water tunnel, what did you have to do?
- AL: We drilled for water, because the company knew that water was running away to Mānele on the mountain. So they wanted to catch that vein, yeah? Save the water and [made it] go to the pineapple [fields]. And we found 'em. I think we went down 620 and another 100-something feet, 1,800 feet we went drill.
- WN: Down? Or. . . .
- AL: Well, 620, 45 degree.
- WN: Forty-five degree angle?
- AL: And then straight on another 1,200 feet or so.
- WN: This was like Mānele?
- AL: No, this is up here. Well [number] 1. They call it Well 1. It's right up here.
- WN: But this is a water tunnel at . . .
- AL: Well 1. They hit the water. Get like three million gallons, I think, a day. They catch the water, so instead of running [off] to Mānele to the ocean, they caught the water. Nice and cold. Like icebox water.
- WN: This was more for the fields?
- AL: I think it's drinking water. It was nice water. Good, clean water. I still remember at the end of the 620 foot [tunnel] they built a big—just like a station where you get a pump room. All cement inside there. Then blockade front of the tunnel, save the water. When they need, just open the valve (makes a *whoosh* sound). Scary, but just got to work. Feel like a rat way down there. You look up the small *puka*. If everything ever come cave in, you just had it.
- WN: So you guys actually digging?
- AL: Yeah, all with compressed air. They call it air machine. (Makes a mechanical sound.) We drill first. After we load them up with powder, blast them out, we have an air machine like a loader just driving through it. We get the *kine* like train. We get carts. Fill them up inside car. When you

put them on the side you take the other cart, bring them to the end of the shaft. There's another big cart there where you dump them inside. Somebody out there operating, bring them up. Dump them on the dump truck. They will clean them up and then drill again. Scary job. Now I think about it, man, I went through it, but I did it. I'm still here. Lucky thing.

I did that for over one year over here, then I moved to Honolulu after that. They needed us on that side, so I went. Waihe'e Tunnel, Kāne'ohe. Big site, we went. When I look back, the entrance was just like a rat hole. Small. I used to drive bulldozer. Push the dirt on the side. That's where I learned a lot of equipment work.

WN: So how long did it take for you folks to do that job? To finish the digging.

AL: Waihe'e? I stopped. I didn't stay all the way. I think I stayed there maybe less than a year. I wouldn't come back. I never liked that. I think Honolulu was too hard for me.

WN: Oh, this was the Honolulu one you're talking about?

AL: The Honolulu one, yeah. Over here I finished it, but they took me Honolulu. I couldn't get used to. Couldn't settle.

WN: You guys had to dynamite too, huh?

AL: Yeah. We load powder inside six feet deep, depend on how deep we drill. Then we fill them up with gelatin powder. They look like candlesticks. This long and that fat. Smash them inside there. All the holes, you smashed. And you set in the caps. Electric caps. After you fill them up you have caps and you have numbers. So when you go out—you hook them up and you go outside. For the blast.

WN: Wow. Dangerous, huh?

AL: Yeah. But it was good money. The pay was big.

WN: I was going to ask you, what was the best—of all these jobs what was the best pay?

AL: At that time, the tunnel was the best pay. Other jobs—well when I worked for Tanaka Construction, it was pretty good pay, too. But at that time, tunnel was money. Nowadays it's not big money, but that time it was big money. [Working for] the [pineapple] company was getting a dollar something, and I was getting like \$2.80, \$2.60. Way over the company.

WN: So you were paid by Western Builders? You were employed by Western Builders?

AL: Yes. One of them, Western Builders. I used to work for South Pacific [Construction], too. School buildings that we used to work on. Thomas Tanaka, I worked for Thomas Tanaka.

WN: How did you learn all this *kine* work?

AL: I learned by experience. Just go as helper and I learned from that. Even I learned electrician work, plumbing, all by helping. I'm not always good, but most of the time I get 'em. (Chuckles) I tell you, that's why I say to my kids, "Get as much education as you can." Because it's so important in this world to do what you going to do, how to do it. With education, you can do it. Without that, you have to struggle. You can learn, and it's not easy, but everybody can do it. But



education, nothing is impossible with a willing heart. That's true, you know, now I'm pushing education. Before, I stay fool around. When you're young I guess you got to learn the hard way sometimes. But education, take as much as you can and go out and do it. Some are fortunate, some are not, but if you try hard enough you can be fortunate too. You can get help from somebody. If you worth it, they're going to help you if you show that you can do it.

WN: And you also did road work. Fixing roads?

AL: Yeah. All these roads in the camp. We used to spray rocks. Get the tar man with the machine. We undump the dump truck. Two guys—one side, one side. Spray the rocks. Cheap, small kind of stuff. The finishing was all by hand. You got to know how to squish it. Shovel it in.

WN: This is what, to fix pothole?

AL: No. Fix road.

WN: To actually make the road?

AL: Yeah.

WN: What *kine* chip you said?

AL: Fine chips. Little chips, just like a finishing chips. Rocks. It's rock, smaller ones.

WN: So like gravel?

AL: Yeah. Fine ones. But all hand-shoveled. You got to shovel how much you can handle. You shovel too much you no can carry the shovel, eh? (Laughs) I was skinny before.

WN: Wow. So how long you did that?

AL: I didn't finish this whole city. I stayed until they laid me off. I don't remember how long, but it must have been at least a couple of years, I think.

WN: So these roads over here? Right here?

AL: This is an old road, but inside the camps—all inside those. This mostly it's just retouch.

WN: Yeah, but this is macadamized though. You guys work on macadamizd roads like this?

AL: Tar. Bituminous.

WN: Okay. And you also did field work? You still working pineapple?

AL: Oh yeah.

WN: Part-time here and there?

AL: Pineapple. From school days we worked. Pineapple, which is hard to get up early in the morning, but we did it.

- WN: So while you're doing these construction jobs and so forth, you also worked pineapple same time?
- AL: No. When I was construction I stopped pineapple until construction stopped, then I went [back to working] pineapple.
- WN: Oh, so like seasonal? When the job is done, no more work?
- AL: I go pineapple. Wherever get, I go jump to the job.
- WN: So did you join the union?
- AL: No.
- WN: You didn't join the union because you were part-time.
- AL: I was seasonal, yeah. I wasn't even a regular worker. (Chuckles) It was a hard life, but good life.
- WN: I hear you worked Mānele Bay Hotel food server. This is what, the new hotel?
- AL: Food server? No, not me. How did I get that?
- WN: I don't know.
- AL: My wife.
- WN: Oh, your wife?
- AL: Yeah, my wife worked food server.
- WN: Oh, that's right, that's right. Sorry.
- So now I want to get into Pine Isle Market. I think you said here you worked from [19]56?
- AL: Yeah.
- WN: That was full-time?
- AL: Yeah.
- WN: But prior to that you worked Pine Isle, part-time?
- AL: No, I started Pine Isle in '56, and then I worked theater same time.
- WN: Oh, okay. So Pine Isle and theater same time?
- AL: Yeah.
- WN: Nineteen fifty-six, okay. So tell me what did you do? What were your jobs at Pine Isle Market?

- AL: I did freight work. Stock shelf. Delivery, a lot of deliveries before. We had to deliver milk, we'd deliver bread, chicken feed, food, assorted things. Sometimes eight o'clock in the night we're still delivering.
- WN: So by "delivery" you're saying somebody came to the store and bought something, but couldn't carry it out?
- AL: Yeah, a lot of delivery service, part of the business I think before, you just leave your name, your address, you pay for your grocery and we got the bill made out and we go deliver to you. So we start in one area and go deliver. No more room, go back and get some more.
- WN: And who filled the order?
- AL: Oh, the clerks. But, the bulky stuff like chicken feed, rice, or stuff, we get the bills and we go load them on the truck. But the grocery, the ladies—mostly the ladies.
- WN: So you would just go get the truck, go to Pine Isle, pick up like a package that had somebody's name on it?
- AL: Yeah. If the box or package got one name already, you match them with the bill you get. Then you set them up so when you go you would just one area cover.
- WN: Was that same day?
- AL: Yeah. Today you order, today we deliver. You buy today, we deliver today. From Pine Isle, I would go to the theater [for the second job].
- WN: You said you hauled freight?
- AL: Yeah.
- WN: What did you have to do?
- AL: Well, they get the bin yard. I don't think you get bin yards. They don't have now. Pineapple bin.
- WN: Pineapple bin?
- AL: Yeah, it's a big, open bin. Inside empty. And we go with a truck, bulldog truck. It's flat like that.
- WN: Oh, bulldog truck? Yeah.
- AL: Pine Isle [Market] bought one. They had one for the store, so I had to learn to drive it. I drive, I go down, pick up, and then. . . .
- WN: To?
- AL: To the [Kaumālapa'u] Harbor. My boss go with me sometimes, and we hand load. You know, the rice comes in a container. We take out the rice and put them in our truck. It was hard job.
- WN: How often did rice come?

- AL: Well, we eat a lot of rice—the locals. I think if you order big order, maybe about one month, because people buy hundred-pound bag before. They live mostly on the rice before. Starch food. Me and my boss were skinny, but we was pretty strong. Funny when you're young, we were strong. Mr. Honda. Isamu.
- WN: Isamu Honda?
- AL: Yeah, he's slim too. Me and him was both slim, but we did it.
- WN: So had not just rice, but had all different *kine*?
- AL: Oh, groceries. We had assorted things. We used to sell a lot of material [i.e., dry goods] too, for clothing. The wrap-up kind. Like some big stores get now.
- WN: Oh, fabric?
- AL: Yeah. They used to sell that.
- Cow [i.e., beef]. Before, the cows [were large], not like now, they got them small now. Before, they sell them by the quarters. Ho, sometimes you and the cow go fall down, so you got to know how to lift.
- WN: So the cow came from where?
- AL: From Honolulu.
- WN: How come you couldn't get from the [Lānaʻi] Ranch over here?
- AL: Well, the ranch gave up in the [19]50s. They stopped, so you have to buy from Honolulu.
- WN: So you used to put them in the truck at Kaumālapaʻu [Harbor], then. . . .
- AL: Bring them up [to Lānaʻi] City.
- WN: Bring them up to the store.
- AL: Well, the meat used to come through the airport [i.e., air freight]. The other groceries from Kaumālapaʻu.
- WN: So then you would bring the freight, and then who would stock them on the shelves?
- AL: All the workers. We all get to cooperate. If I get free [time]—if I no more delivery, I go stock shelf, too. If not, I go deliver. That's like what we're doing today. Stack shelf. I stack shelf yet.
- WN: Oh, you still do that?
- AL: I still do (laughs) after many years. I enjoy what I doing. I just liked it. I enjoy my job.
- WN: So when you go deliver to people's houses, you used to go talk story, stuff like that?
- AL: Oh yeah. Once in a while you get friendly. They get friendly question. You talk story. You become pretty close friends when you deliver all the time. Before days we used to talk a lot more.

(WN laughs.) Everybody too busy nowadays. (Laughs) No more time, but before, yeah, you talked. You enjoy it.

WN: They used to give you food?

AL: Oh yeah, they give you food too. Snack or whatever they get, or something to drink. Holidays come, they leave present for you too, sometimes.

WN: Nice.

AL: Yeah, nice.

WN: What about tip? They used to tip you?

AL: Yeah, but I not take tip. They give me tip, I give them back. No need. That's part of our service, I thought.

WN: So they didn't pay extra to get delivery?

AL: No, just like that. Like now everything is money. You go to restaurant or wherever you go, somebody help you carry—oh, tip. They got to make a living too, sometimes no can help.

WN: For the store, you got paid by the hour?

AL: Yeah, by the hour. I started with eighty-five cents an hour, small the pay. Store is mostly hard business. Not right away you make money. So everybody struggled together, work as a team. As time go by, everybody benefit. It was great. I said you work hard, you get reward, yeah? That's true. You mess up, you don't get nothing. Can you imagine living my life? (Laughs)

WN: Eighty-five cents an hour, that's. . . .

AL: It's small. But I didn't have five kids then.

WN: Yeah, but still.

AL: When you work hard, you get eighty-five cents an hour, but good boss. You get bonus too sometimes.

WN: So, as you're working these jobs like Pine Isle, you're working the theater, while you're doing this and making this small money, how did you save money? How did you economize when you had a family?

AL: Whatever I could save, which was not much. But like I say, I had good parents and my wife had good parents. We had no rent to pay. Whatever we make, we keep. They give us that much help. And we sometimes helped too, but mostly they helping us—the parents. That's why, how can you go wrong, with that kind of help? Feed you and yet you still don't give them money, so you saved. So you have money, but not much because the pay wasn't much. But we had clothes, we had food, we had help—main thing was all right.

WN: It's good that you're saying that your parents and your in-laws helped out. Had to have that.

- AL: Or else disaster. We wouldn't be the way we are today. I definitely think we wouldn't make it. It was sort of backbones—the parents, family. That's where the strength came in. Gave us the strength and guidance to be more successful in our life.
- WN: And you said you also worked for the state highways?
- AL: Yeah.
- WN: And then airport?
- AL: Yeah. State [of Hawai'i].
- WN: When did you start working there? When did you start working there for the state?
- AL: I think I started [working] for the state way back. I got to count the years. Airport, I started late. I got about twenty-six, twenty-seven years.
- WN: When did you retire?
- AL: I retired [19]88.
- WN: [Nineteen] eighty-eight? So minus twenty-seven, right?
- AL: Yeah. But, when I retired '88, I still got two more years.
- WN: You started maybe around 1960, '61?
- AL: For?
- WN: For the state.
- AL: Wait. Yeah, yeah, yeah, [19]61. That's right.
- WN: So I would imagine once you got employment with the state, things got a little bit better for you guys?
- AL: Oh yes. Definitely. Well, not right away but yeah, we had good medical plan. Benefit was nice. You get sick leave and all those things involved so you know you can plan how much money you're going to make every month. Balance and manage the funds. Big difference. Glad I worked for the state, 100 percent [better].
- WN: So I would think that working for the state was better benefits than working for the company.
- AL: Definitely, yes. Nothing against the company, but what the state offered was better.
- WN: So was it fairly easy to get a state job? Or was that really in-demand?
- AL: No, it wasn't easy. Like Lāna'i is a small place. You didn't get too much opportunity for state work. In fact, I got into state work because they just completed the harbor road—state highway. So we applied and I took tests once I wanted to get the job. It's fortunate because I had experience on pavement. That road work, and the tools. I know what *kine* tools to use. I did pretty good on my test. So that's how I got it.

WN: So when you were doing the roads you were working for private construction company? When they were building the state road, that's when you applied for. . . .

AL: Kaumālapa'u. That became state road. That's the opening.

WN: I see, so you started out working for the road—highways.

AL: Highways. Yeah.

WN: You were helping to build that road? That state road?

AL: No, I was hired as a maintenance [worker]. But, patching road when we did road work—I know what to do, so when I did the test I know how to [answer] the question. (Chuckles)

WN: Well, they hired an experienced man.

AL: Yeah, I had to do it the hard way.

(Laughter)

WN: And so when you shifted to the airport, what *kine* work did you do for airport?

AL: Almost the same. I was an AOM III [Airport Operations & Maintenance III], like working supervisor. And my title was AOM III, which I do supervising, I do maintenance, I did the laundry area, clean the buildings, repair whatever needed it. Regular maintenance work.

I also was a fireman. We did a lot. I also was a policeman too, airport policeman. When the flight. . . . I take care of, you know, some people come in drunk like that. I have to chase them out.

WN: Oh, you were like security?

AL: Yeah, I was security too. Fireman. I did all that. Like now they get one person, one guy [for each job]. Our days, you do more than one kind of work. I don't mind, I enjoyed working. It's a challenge. If you can do it, do it.

WN: Well, we're almost done. I just wanted to ask you about—you still work in Pine Isle Market?

AL: Yes, I am. Still am. I work tomorrow in fact. (Laughs)

WN: Not today?

AL: Not today. I took off. I took a physical.

WN: You know, a lot of changes going on in Lāna'i. There's a new owner now, Mr. [Larry] Ellison.

AL: Yes. Mr. Ellison.

WN: Prior to that it was Mr. [David] Murdock. You know, what are your feelings about the changes that have taken place on Lāna'i? I mean, you've lived through the company years, through Murdock when pineapple closed down, and now Ellison. What can you say about your thoughts and feelings about Lāna'i?

- AL: Well, I really don't know yet, because things have just started to change. But I'm glad for one thing that Mr. Ellison came in and did something about Lāna'i. If he can improve Lāna'i's future, I hope. I just hope for the best. Thinking about a—get a better life, because everything needs to be controlled. Development control, resources. How much can the island support? Natural resources got to be controlled. I just hope for the best. We got to move on.
- WN: When you go to places like Honolulu or wherever, and they say, "Hey, where you from?" and you say, "Lāna'i." Do you feel pride?
- AL: Oh yeah. I feel pride of Lāna'i. It's a nice place, quiet. Just last week when I went Honolulu, this lady, she works in a doctor's office, she said she came here several times with her husband. They know somebody over here, so I said, "How you like Lāna'i?"
- "Oh, we love Lāna'i." Makes me feel proud to hear that. My neighbors—new neighbors, they bought a house. They like it over here because it's quiet and peaceful. Not noisy. Lot of places not going help the lifestyle like that. For myself, I'm used to the simple life. When I go big places—I call Honolulu a big place, or even Maui where my daughter stay. I'm not too comfortable. Too much cars and traffic (chuckles). It's nice to visit, but I cannot live like that. I'm old already, too, anyway.
- WN: Well, you have five children. You have fifteen grandchildren. At last count, thirty-three great-grandchildren.
- AL: Yeah. Don't know how much more. I do have that much.
- WN: Out of the five children, how many still live on Lāna'i?
- AL: My children? Three. Three boys. Those are retired. They retired from the air force and marines. The other one, he was medical discharged from the army. Three of them, they all live Lāna'i.
- WN: Out of the thirty-three great-grandchildren, about how many still live on Lāna'i?
- AL: Let's see. (Pauses to count.) Maybe fifteen or more.
- WN: About half? More than half live on Lāna'i?
- AL: Yeah.
- WN: Would you like to see them continue to live on Lāna'i?
- AL: Well, if they want to, because they used to this lifestyle, most of them. They can fit in. But, it's up to them how to. The younger ones maybe they want more challenge outside. They have to decide, but I'd sure like to have them here if they want. But they make the decision.
- WN: Well, we're done.
- AL: Are we done?
- WN: I want to thank you very much for your time.
- AL: Okay, Mr. Warren.



WN: You know, I talked to someone. I just want to say this while I still have the tape recorder on, that somebody told me—I told them that I'm interviewing you—they told me in all the years that they knew you, they never saw you angry or say anything bad about anybody.

AL: I don't like to be negative. I always put in my mind that [being] angry is not good. It's not for nobody. But, sometimes you cannot help it. But if I'm angry, it's with just myself. Nobody else.

(Laughter)

I love people. I don't want to hurt people. That's how I feel.

WN: Well, that's a good way to live life.

AL: Yep. Live happily.

WN: Thank you very much.

AL: I thank you Warren, very much. It was my pleasure.

WN: No, it was my pleasure. Thank you very much. It was very enjoyable, and I learned a lot.

AL: Of my lifetime. (Laughs)

WN: Yeah. (Laughs)

AL: Thank you.

WN: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

# **Lāna‘i:**

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Center for Oral History  
Social Science Research Institute  
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

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